

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER FORUM

Friday, May 18, 2012

8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Science Museum of Minnesota—Discovery Hall

120 West Kellogg Boulevard, St. Paul, MN 55102

**7:45-8:30**      **Registration and Continental Breakfast**

**8:30**              **Welcoming Remarks**

*Paul Labovitz. Superintendent, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, National Park Service.*

**8:45-9:30**      **Where Will the Eagles Nest? MNRRRA Floodplain Forest Failure**

Trees within the floodplain forests of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRRA) are not successfully regenerating. In a natural (undammed) river, the age and distribution of floodplain forest species are controlled largely by the pulses in stream flow that floods provide. Dams result in significant changes to the makeup of floodplain forests. In sites monitored within MNRRRA, cottonwoods (characteristic of our floodplain forests) exist only as large individuals and at very low densities, indicating they are not successfully regenerating—and raising questions about the future of the species once these older individuals die off. Green ash is among the species that is found within the smallest class sizes, suggesting they *are* regenerating successfully. What will our floodplain forests look like when our old cottonwoods begin to die off, and once the emerald ash borer becomes fully established in our area? Knowing that large trees like cottonwood are important to nesting eagles, how can resource managers along a dammed river ensure diverse floodplain forests that support a healthy ecosystem in the future?

*Suzanne Sanders. National Park Service.*

**9:30-9:45**      **Break**

**9:45-10:30**      **Perspectives on Asian Carp: Insights from Both Sides of the Planet**

As several species of Asian carp have become established and spread throughout the Mississippi River basin, natural resource agencies are faced with making many profound, expensive, and perhaps long-lasting decisions on how best to manage these invasive species. Using lessons learned from Chinese researchers—where communities are trying to *restore* their Asian carp populations—as well as from our own long-term monitoring efforts, U.S. researchers are getting a better understanding of what we do and do not know about these species. Come learn about the distribution and spread of Asian carp throughout the Mississippi River basin, as well as findings about their habitat and fish community composition, and results from early modeling efforts that attempt to quantify their potential impact on U.S. aquatic ecosystems.

*Brian Ickes. U.S. Geological Survey (Upper Mississippi River Restoration-Environmental Management Program) & The Nature Conservancy (Great Rivers Partnership).*

**10:30-11:15     A Water Ethic: Building on Leopold's Legacy**

Our region is dealing with many water management issues that are urgent and which require quick decisions based on limited resources; we also face a number of enormous challenges that are the result of decades of practices and decisions. We know we will always have constraints within which our land and water management decisions are made, but what is the "big picture" ethic on which our decisions are based? Aldo Leopold biographer and conservation biologist Curt Meine will explore the idea of a "water ethic" and ask the audience to step back and reflect on what future we are contributing to in a very deep yet basic way.

*Curt Meine. Aldo Leopold Foundation.*

**11:15-11:45     Break**

**11:45-12:30     Keynote Address: Commissioner Dave Frederickson, Minnesota Department of Agriculture**

Dave Frederickson was appointed as Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture by Governor Dayton in January 2011. After beginning his career as a teacher, Commissioner Frederickson served in the Minnesota State Senate in the 1980s and 1990s, representing constituents in Swift, Yellow Medicine, Lac Qui Parle, Chippewa, and Redwood Counties. Frederickson has served as president of both the Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), and the National Farmers Union (NFU). In both organizations, he worked on federal farm policy and other issues important to farmers and ranchers. From 2007 to 2010, Frederickson worked as agricultural outreach director for U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, talking frequently with Minnesota farmers, ranchers and rural residents about the federal issues that mattered most to them.

*We are honored that Commissioner Frederickson will be with us to discuss the role of the Minnesota Agriculture Water Quality Certification Program, as we work toward clean water for the Mississippi River.*

**12:30                Closing Remarks**

*Lark Weller. Water Quality Coordinator, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.*

***This event has been brought to you by the National Park Service with support from the Mississippi River Fund, with a special thank you to the Science Museum of Minnesota for hosting today's event.***